

## How to Use the National Park Service Wilderness Education and Interpretation Resource Notebook

Welcome to the NPS Wilderness Education and Interpretation Resource Notebook—*Celebrate Wilderness!* At your fingertips is a world of wilderness—full of information and inspiration—for your exploration as you develop and expand your park’s wilderness education program.

This notebook will assist you in fulfilling a responsibility and a need. You have a responsibility to incorporate wilderness into your educational and interpretive programs and products. National Park Service Management Policy states: “. . . national park units with wilderness resources will: (1) operate public education programs designed to promote and perpetuate public awareness of, and appreciation for, wilderness character, resources, and ethics . . .” While there is generally broad support for wilderness among the American public, there is also much confusion about the definition of wilderness, its significance, and its meaning. A compelling need exists to interpret wilderness to the public.

First, glance through this notebook. As time passes, you can delve more deeply into specific sections. Consider it a reference and a starting point. Approach it with questions and use it to direct you to other resources. Some sections in this notebook are available for you to place relevant wilderness information about your own park. In other sections, you can add forthcoming Servicewide products. This is a notebook, not a bound book. It is designed to be a dynamic, adaptable resource.

Your challenge is to incorporate wilderness messages into all park programming. Infuse wilderness information into events, exhibits, media, and programs that already exist, and develop new wilderness-specific events, media, and programs. Have you considered organizing a special event to celebrate the designation of wilderness in your park? Could you coordinate with planned national celebrations honoring the anniversary of the Wilderness Act? Is there wilderness information on your park web page and in your park newspaper? Is the park’s wilderness area indicated on the park brochure?

Wilderness is both a tangible and an intangible resource. There are definite boundaries surrounding physical, natural, and cultural resources, but wilderness is also an idea with historical significance. The universal concepts of survival, freedom, hope, and mystery are associated with wilderness as both a place and an idea. This notebook presents you with an opportunity to develop a deeper knowledge of the wilderness at your park and in the National Wilderness Preservation System, so that you can facilitate meaningful connections within your audiences.

Combine the information in this notebook with your interpretive skills and your passion—your passion for your park, your passion for interpreting wilderness to visitors and education groups, and your passion for preserving wilderness and the wilderness experience for future generations. You are now part of the process to fulfill not only the mission of the National Park Service, but also the purpose of the Wilderness Act: “to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.”

